

NOW herkne wel; forwhy I wille
Tellen thee a propre skile,
And worthy demonstracioun
In myn imaginacioun.

EFFREY, thou wost right wel this,
That every kindly thing that is,
Hath a kindly stede ther he
May best in hit conserved be;
Unto which place every thing,
Through his kindly enclyning,
Moveth for to come to,
Whan that hit is away therfro;
As thus; lo, thou mayst al day see
That any thing that hevye be,
As stoon or leed, or thing of wighte,
And ber hit never so hye on highte,
Lat go thyn hand, hit falleth down.

RIGHT so seye I by fyre or soun,
Or smoke, or other thinges lighte,
Alwey they seke upward on highte;
Whyl ech of hem is at his large,
Light thing up, and downward charge.

AND for this cause mayst thou see,
That every river to the see
Enclyned is to go, by kinde.
And by these skilles, as I finde,
Hath fish dwellinge in floode and see,
And treës eek in erthe be.
Thus every thing, by this resoun,
Hath his propre mansioun,
To which hit seketh to repaire;
As ther hit shulde not apaire.
Lo, this sentence is knowen couthe
Of every philosophes mouthe,
As Aristotle and dan Platon,
And other clerkes many oon;
And to confirme my resoun,
Thou wost wel this, that speche is soun,
Or elles no man mighte hit here;
Now herkne what I wol thee lere.

SOUN is noght but air ybroken,
And every speche that is spoken,
Loud or privee, foul or fair,
In his substaunce is but air;
for as flaumbe is but lighted smoke,
Right so soun is air ybroke.
But this may be in many wyse,
Of which I wil thee two devyse,
As soun that comth of pype or harpe;
for whan a pype is blowen sharpe,
The air is twist with violence,
And rent; lo, this is my sentence;
Eek, whan men harpe stringes smyte,
Whether hit be moche or lyte,
Lo, with the strook the air tobreketh;
Right so hit breketh whan men speket.

NOW henneth I wol thee teche,
How every speche, or noise, or soun,
Through his multiplicacioun,
Thogh hit were pyped of a mouse,
Moot nede come to fames Hous.
I preve hit thus, tak hede now,

By experience; for if that thou
Throwe on water now a stoon,
Wel wost thou, hit wol make anoon
A litel roundel as a cercle,
Paraventure brood as a covercle;
And right anoon thou shalt see weel,
That wheel wol cause another wheel,
And that the thridde, and so forth, brother,
Every cercle causing other,
Wyder than himselve was;
And thus, fro roundel to compas,
Ech aboute other goinge,
Caused of othres steringe,
And multiplying evermo,
Til that hit be so fer ygo
That hit at bothe brinkes be.
Althogh thou mowe hit not ysee
Above, hit goth yet alway under,
Althogh thou thenke hit a gret wonder,
And whoso seith of trouthe I varie,
Bid him proven the contrarie.
And right thus every word, ywis,
That loude or privee spoken is,
Moveth first an air aboute,
And of this moving, out of doute,
Another air anoon is meved,
As I have of the water preved,
That every cercle causeth other.
Right so of air, my leve brother;
Everich air in other stereth
More and more, and speche up bereth,
Or vois, or noise, or word, or soun,
Ay through multiplicacioun,
Til hit be atte Hous of fame;
Tak hit in earnest or in game.

NOW have I told, if thou have minde,
How speche or soun, of pure kinde,
Enclyned is upward to meve;
This, mayst thou fele, wel I preve.
And that the mansioun, ywis,
That every thing enclyned to is,
Hath his kindeliche stede:
Than sheweth hit, withouten drede,
That kindly the mansioun
Of every speche, of every soun,
Be hit either foul or fair,
Hath his kinde place in air.
And sin that every thing, that is
Out of his kinde place, ywis,
Moveth thider for to go
If hit awaye be therfro,
As I before have preved thee,
Hit seweth, every soun, pardee,
Moveth kindly to pace
Al up into his kindely place.
And this place of which I telle,
Ther as fame list to dwelle,
Is set amiddes of these three,
Heven, erthe, and eek the see,
As most conservatif the soun.
Than is this the conclusioun,
That every speche of every man,
As I thee telle first began,

Moveth up on high to pace
Kindely to fames place.

ELE me this feithfully,
Have I not preved thus simply,
Withouten any subtiltee
Of speche, or gret prolixitee
Of termes of philosophye,
Of figures of poetrye,
Or colours of rethoryke?
Pardee, hit oghte thee to lyke;
for hard langage and hard matere
Is encombrous for to here
At ones; wost thou not wel this?
And I answerde, and seyde, Yis.

A! quod he, lo, so I can
Lewedly to a lewed man
Speke, and shewe him swiche skiles,
That he may shake hem by the biles,
So palpable they shulden be.
But tel me this, now pray I thee,
How thinkst thee my conclusioun?
Quod he, A good persuasioun,
Quod I, hit is; and lyk to be
Right so as thou hast preved me.
By God, quod he, and as I leve,
Thou shalt have yit, or hit be eve,
Of every word of this sentence
I preve, by experience;
And with thyn eres heren wel
Top and tail, and everydel,
That every word that spoken is
Comth into fames Hous, ywis,
As I have seyde; what wilt thou more?
And with this word upper to sore
he gan, and seyde: By Seynt Yame!
Now wil we spoken al of game.

NOW farest thou? quod he to me.
Wel, quod I, Now see, quod he,
By thy trouthe, yond adoun,
Wher that thou knowest any toun,
Or hous, or any other thing,
And whan thou hast of ought knowing,
Loke that thou warne me,
And I anoon shal telle thee
How fer that thou art now therfro.

AND I adoun gan loken tho,
And beheld feldes and plaines,
And now hilles, and now mountaines,
Now valeys, and now forestes,
And now, unethes, grette bestes;
Now riveres, now citees,
Now tounes, and now grette trees,
Now shippes sailinge in the see.

BUT thus sone in a while he
Was flowen fro the grounde so
hye,
That al the world, as to myn yē,
No more semed than a prikke;
Or elles was the air so thikke
That I ne mighte not discerne.
With that he spak to me as yerne,
And seyde: Seestow any toun
Or ought thou knowest yonder doun?

SEYDE Nay, No wonder nis,
Quod he, for half so high as this
Nas Alexander Macedo;
Ne the king, dan Scipio,
That saw in dreame, at point devys,
Helle and erthe, and paradys;
Ne eek the wrecche Dedalus,
Ne his child, nyce Icarus,
That fleigh so highe that the hete
His winges malt, and he fel wete
Inmid the see, and ther he dreynete,
for whom was maked moch compleynt.

NOW turn upward, quod he, thy face,
And behold this large place,
This air; but loke thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalt see;
for in this regium, certain,
Dwelleth many a citezein,
Of which that speket dan Plato.
These ben the cyrish bestes, lo!

AND so saw I al that meynne
Bothe goon and also flece.
Now, quod he tho, cast up
thyn yē;
See yonder, lo, the Galaxyē,
Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,
for hit is whyt; and somme, parfey,
Callen hit Matlinge Strete:

That ones was ybrent with hete,
Whan the sonnes sone, the rede,
That highte Pheton, wolde lede
Algate his fader cart, and gye.
The cart hors gonne wel espye
That he ne coude no governaunce,
And gonne for to lepe and launce,
And beren him now up, now doun,
Til that he saw the Scorioun,
Which that in heven a signe is yit.
And he, for ferde, loste his wit,
Of that, and leet the reynes goon
Of his hors; and they anoon
Gonne up to mounte, and doun descende
Til bothe the eyr and erthe brende;
Til Jupiter, lo, atte laste,
Him slow, and fro the carte caste.
Lo, is it not a gret mischaunce,
To lete a fole han governaunce
Of thing that he can not demeine?

AND with this word, soth for to seyne,
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me ay more and more,
So feithfully to me spak he.

HO gan I loken under me,
And beheld the cyrish bestes,
Cloudes, mistes, and tempestes,
Snowes, hailes, reines, windes,
And thengendring in hir kindes,
And al the wey through which I cam;
O God, quod I, that made Adam,
Moch is thy might and thy noblesse!

AND tho thoughte I upon Boece,
That writ: A thought may flece so hye,
With fetheres of Philosophye,